

11 federal agencies to look into Elon Musk and his companies, per Mike Benz, executive director of Foundation of Freedom Online

Not even Elon Musk knows the full details of the U.S. spy satellites his company's rockets send into orbit.

According to *The Wall Street Journal*, SpaceX executives decided Musk, the company's founder and CEO, shouldn't pursue the highest-level security clearance. Lawyers reportedly warned that his alleged drug use and frequent interactions with foreign governments could jeopardize SpaceX's critical defense contracts.

Despite not holding the clearance, Musk's relationship with President-elect Donald Trump could soon give him unprecedented access to the nation's most sensitive secrets once Trump takes office in January.

Typically, defense contractors, like government employees, are required to hold varying levels of security clearances—ranging from confidential to top-secret—to access classified information. Musk only secured top-secret clearance in 2022.

However, SpaceX's *Starshield* program, which provides spy satellite hardware and services to U.S. intelligence agencies, requires even stricter access levels. This includes clearances for “**sensitive**

compartmentalized information” (SCI)—which covers intelligence sources and methods—and **“special access programs”** that pertain to highly sensitive operations.

SpaceX currently holds **\$5.32 billion** in contracts with the Department of Defense, including a **\$70 million** deal with the Pentagon in 2023.

Due to his lack of higher-level clearance, Musk cannot enter SpaceX’s classified Starshield facilities or access certain details about its spy satellite operations—like the exact nature of the payloads his rockets carry into space, the *Journal* reported. Representatives for Musk did not respond to requests for comment.

The report notes that SpaceX executives and legal advisors debated in 2023 whether Musk should apply for a higher clearance. Ultimately, they feared his alleged drug use and extensive contact with foreign leaders might cause the application to fail, risking further scrutiny and complications for the company.